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REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application and entry of the amendment are respectfully requested. Claims 1, 3, 5, 7 to 11, 13, 15 to 17, 19 to 21, 23 to 25, 30 to 33 and 35 are currently pending, claims 1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 15 to 17, 19 to 21, 23 to 25, 30, 32, and 33 have been canceled, and claim 5 has been amended.

The Office Action mailed November 8, 2004 addressed claims 1, 3, 5, 7 to 11, 13, 15 to 17, 19 to 21, 23 to 25, 30 to 33 and 35. Claims 1, 3, 5, 7 to 9, 11, 13, 15 to 17, 19 to 21, 23 to 25, 30, 32 and 33 were rejected, claim 10 was objected to, and claims 31 and 35 was allowed.

Claim 10 was objected to by the Examiner as dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 5, 7 to 9, 11, 13, 15 to 17, 19 to 21 and 33 were variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Higuchi et al. (US 5,725,442) in view of Schenk (US 4,085,937).

Although Applicants continue to respectfully disagree with the Examiner, in an effort to hasten prosecution, claim 5 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 10, which the Examiner stated would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 5 is therefore allowable. Claims 8, 11 and 13 depend from amended claim 5, and are also therefore allowable. Claims 1, 7, 9, 15 to 17, 19 to 21 and 33 have been canceled by this Amendment. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute the canceled claims in a divisional application.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 5, 7 to 9, 11, 13, 15 to 17, 19 to 21 and 33 are not obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Higuchi in view of Schenk. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1, 5, 7 to 9, 11, 13, 15 to 17, 19 to 21 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Higuchi in view of Schenk be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 23, 24 and 32 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Higuchi et al. (US 5,725,442) in view of Schenk (US 4,085,937) and further in view of Sullivan et al. (US 5,803,831).

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Although Applicants continue to respectfully disagree with the Examiner, in an effort to hasten prosecution, claims 23, 24 and 32 have been canceled by this Amendment.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 23, 24 and 32 are not obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Higuchi et al. in view of Schenk and further in view of Sullivan et al. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of claims 23, 24 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Higuchi et al. in view of Schenk and further in view of Sullivan et al. be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 25 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Higuchi et al. (US 5,725,442) in view of Schenk (US 4,085,937) and further in view of Calabria et al. (US 5,733,428).

Although Applicants continue to respectfully disagree with the Examiner, in an effort to hasten prosecution, claims 25 and 30 have been canceled by this Amendment.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 25 and 30 are not obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Higuchi et al. in view of Schenk and further in view of Calabria et al. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of claims 25 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Higuchi et al. in view of Schenk and further in view of Calabria et al. be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Egashira et al. (US 5,439,227) in view of Schenk (US 4,085,937).

Although Applicants continue to respectfully disagree with the Examiner, in an effort to hasten prosecution, claim 3 has been canceled by this Amendment.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 3 is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Egashira et al. in view of Schenk. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Egashira et al. in view of Schenk be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicants' attorney if it is deemed that a telephone conversation will hasten prosecution of the application.

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CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of each of the presently objected and rejected claims, claims 1, 3, 5, 7 to 11, 13, 15 to 17, 19 to 21, 23 to 25, 30, 32 and 33. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 5, 8, 11, 13, 31 and 35, the claims currently pending.

Respectfully submitted,

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